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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Memorandum



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 1600
26 June 1966

ARMY and DOS review(s)
completed.

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HIGHLIGHTS

US marines continue to put pressure on a North Vietnamese regiment northwest of Hue. Fighting has been heavy, and the marines are reported to have the enemy backed against an inlet on the Gulf of Tonkin.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:
Joint US - South Vietnamese Operation JAY, which began on 24 June, is continuing, with heavy contact reported with an estimated battalion-sized enemy force 15 miles northwest of Hue (Para. 1). Border surveillance Operation PAUL REVERE is continuing in western Pleiku Province, with a total of 512 Viet Cong reported killed (Para. 2). Light contact with Communist forces is reported by US Army units participating in search-and-destroy Operation NATHAN HALE in coastal Phu Yen Province (Para. 3).

A Communist defector describes seaborne infiltration into southernmost An Xuyen Province (Para. 5). Further information on the cargo of the Communist supply vessel which was captured on 20 June off the coast of Vinh Binh Province reveals most of the equipment was of recent manufacture; it included new weapons such as fin-stabilized projectiles for the 75-mm. recoilless rifle, and tracer ammunition for the 12.7-mm. machine gun (Para. 6).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:
Government security troops raided a second Buddhist pagoda in Saigon on 26 June (Para. 1). The internal bickering within the Unified Buddhist Association does not appear to have subsided (Para. 2). Tri Quang, after the nineteenth day of his hunger strike, was reportedly exhausted (Para. 3). The refugee Catholic community around Saigon has reportedly begun preparations for an active electoral campaign to obtain seats in the forthcoming constitutional assembly (Para. 4).

III. Military Developments in North Vietnam: The latest report on infiltration from North Vietnam into the south indicates that more than 24,000 have infiltrated during the first six months of this year. (Para. 1).

IV. Other Communist Military Developments: There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments:

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A North Vietnamese official in Paris claims that morale is high in North Vietnam and that the regime is prepared for an extended war (Paras. 4-5).

VI. Other Major Aspects: There is nothing of significance to report.

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Operation JAY, a search-and-destroy operation being conducted by two battalions of US Marines and four South Vietnamese Army battalions, began on 24 June in an area about 15 miles northwest of Hue in northern Thua Thien Province. MACV currently carries the 6th North Vietnamese Army Regiment, with an estimated strength of 2,000, in the general area of this operation. Heavy contact with an estimated battalion-sized enemy force was established on 25 June. Heavy fighting is reported to be continuing, supported by tactical air strikes, artillery, and naval gunfire. The enemy is reported to be generally surrounded and backed against an inlet on the Gulf of Tonkin. Initial reports indicate American losses of 21 killed and 56 wounded. Initial reports show 53 enemy killed, but the actual Communist losses are probably much higher; US forces have not yet entered the area where most of the Communist casualties are believed to have occurred.

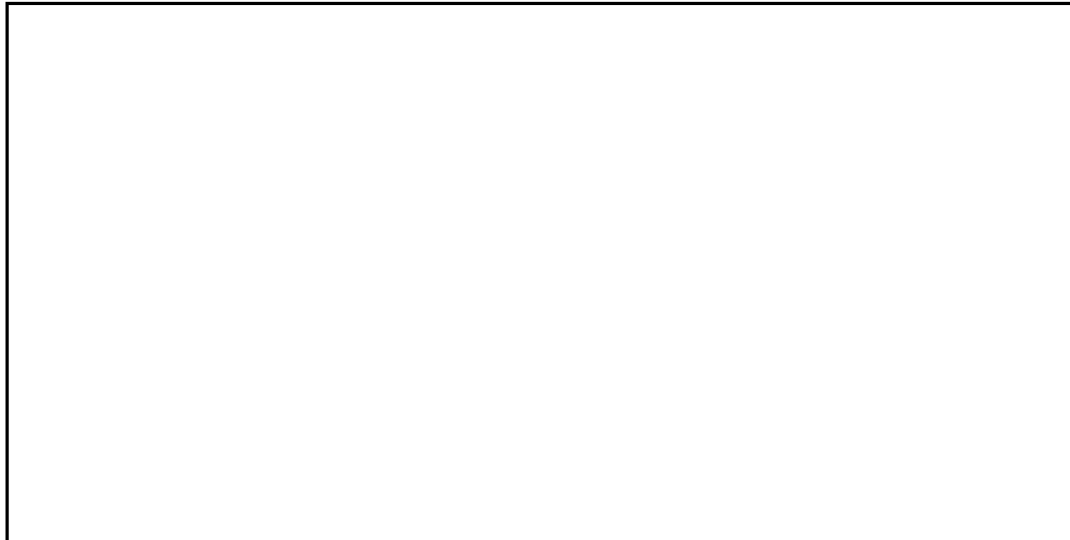
2. Border surveillance Operation PAUL REVERE is continuing in western Pleiku Province. Contact with enemy forces has been light since the 24 June engagement in which 53 North Vietnamese were killed. Since the beginning of this operation on 9 May, 44 Americans have been killed and 234 wounded. Communist losses now total 512 killed and 73 captured, with nearly 200 weapons captured. A total of 246 tactical air sorties have been flown in support.

3. Operation NATHAN HALE, a search-and-destroy operation being conducted in coastal Phu Yen Province, continues with light contact with snipers and squad-sized Viet Cong elements. A total of 58 Americans have been killed and 217 wounded in this operation, which began on 18 June. Communist losses include 393 killed and 17 captured, with 133 weapons captured. A total of 106 tactical air sorties have supported this operation.

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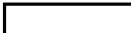
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Communist Seaborne Infiltration

5. A Communist defector has provided information on seaborne infiltration of weapons and ammunition into southernmost An Xuyen Province. 

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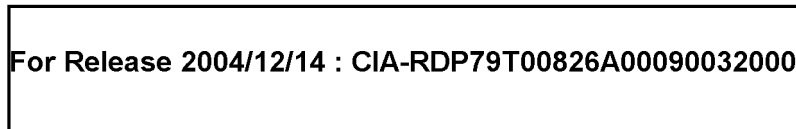
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 has reported that a total of 42 trips were made in 1963, 15 in 1964, and seven in 1965. He attributed the decline of shipments to increased patrolling by the US Navy. During 1963, cargo of these ships was primarily small arms and ammunition, but beginning in 1964 there was a shift to heavier crew-served weapons. The ships used in 1964 and 1965 were described as gray-hulled and approximately 100 feet long, with a capacity of about 60 tons. The ships used in 1963 were similar, but smaller. The ships arrived at one of two creeks in An Xuyen Province and required two to three nights to unload.

6. Further examination of the material from the Viet Cong supply ship which was captured on 20 June off the coast of Vinh Binh Province reveals that the equipment was all newly manufactured. The Chinese 75-mm. recoilless rifle shells and 80-mm. antitank grenades were made in 1966. The 12.7-mm. machine guns were made in 1965, as was most of the

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7.62-mm. ammunition. The Chinese 75-mm. recoilless rifle cartridges were fin-stabilized projectiles. This is the first recovery of this type of 75-mm. ammunition, which has better antitank capabilities. Both Soviet and Chinese 12.7-mm. ammunition, including tracers, were recovered in quantity. This is the first recovery of tracer ammunition for the 12.7-mm. machine gun. The presence of tracer ammunition for the primary Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army antiaircraft weapon in South Vietnam would increase the enemy's capability against aircraft.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Approximately 35 government security troops entered another Buddhist pagoda in Saigon Sunday morning (26 June, Vietnam time). That was the only reported incident to mar the government-Buddhist detente in what was otherwise an uneventful week-end politically. The police reportedly found one submachine gun in a car belonging to a monk outside the pagoda. The only arrests were of some 15 draft-age youths.

2. It does not appear that the opposing factions within the Unified Buddhist Association (UBA) are any closer to reconciliation, despite Vietnamese press reports on 25 June that Tam Chau, Tri Quang, and other leading monks reached an agreement to reorganize the UBA.

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3. Tri Quang was reported by the press on 26 June to be continuing his protest fast against the Ky-Thieu regime. His doctor reportedly told newsmen Saturday that Quang could lapse into a coma at any time.

4. With Buddhist fortunes now apparently on the wane, organizers in the Catholic community around Saigon and in the delta provinces have been making the necessary preparations to enhance the church's representation in the forthcoming September constitutional assembly elections. A Catholic leader told a US Embassy officer that the presidium of the Catholic Citizens Bloc, made up primarily of militant refugees from the North, had been authorized by the archbishop of Saigon to conduct an "active" electoral campaign on behalf of the Catholic Church.

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III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. The latest USMACV report on infiltration offers further evidence that the rate of infiltration during the first six months of this year reached a new high. MACV has raised the total number of infiltrators during 1966 from 20,975 to 24,275 on the basis of newly acquired evidence. Of this number, 10,300 are listed as confirmed, and the rest as probable and possible. By comparison, USMACV estimates that about 22,000 were infiltrated during all of 1965.

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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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4. A North Vietnamese press representative in Paris who recently returned from a two-and-a-half-month visit to North Vietnam claims that morale is high, that the US air strikes are uniting rather than intimidating the population, and that the North Vietnamese regime is prepared for a long war. He stated that the North Vietnamese believe that the US cannot win militarily and will eventually be forced to meet Hanoi's conditions because of the collapse of American public support for the war.

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